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ABSTRACT

Erikson's concept of identity has become a central focus for studying adolescent development. Identity is a psychosocial construct involving the creation of a sense of sameness and continuity, a unity of personality achieved through a process of crisis and commitment. Although culture is a factor in Erikson's theory, research on adolescent identity development has not usually included ethnicity. This study examined ethnicity as one of the issues to be resolved in the development of an achieved identity, comparable to other widely studied issues such as occupation or sex roles. Questionnaires were given to male and female urban college students (N=196) from four groups (Asian-American, Black, Mexican-American, and White). The questionnaire assessed ethnic identity, ethnic identity commitment, achieved ethnic identity, achieved occupational and achieved sex role identity, importance of identity domains, self-esteem, and demographics. Achieved ethnic identity correlated significantly with achieved occupational and sex role identity. Exploration of ethnic identity issues was significantly higher among minority group college students than among white students, but the groups did not differ on commitment to an ethnic identity. Ethnicity was considered to be as important as other traditionally studied areas of identity, and was rated as significantly more important by minorities than by whites. (ABL)

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ETHNIC IDENTITY IN OLDER ADOLESCENTS FROM FOUR ETHNIC GROUPS[1]

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Erik Erikson's concept of identity has become a central focus for studying adolescent development. "Identity" is a psychosocial construct involving the creation of a sense of sameness and continuity, "a unity of personality now felt by the individual and recognized by others" (Erikson, 1963b, p. 11). Identity is achieved through a process of crisis (exploration of alternatives) and commitment (a decision reflecting personal investment) (Erikson, 1968). But identity development is not entirely an individual process; an achieved identity is the product of one's personal history but also one's place in history (Erikson, 1975). "True identity depends on the support which the young receive from the collective sense of identity which social groups assign to [them]: [their] class, [their] nationality, [their] culture" (Erikson, 1964, p. 93). According to Erikson, the study of identity is difficult specifically because the process is " `located' in the core of the individual, and yet also in the core of his communal culture" (Erikson, 1968, p. 22; italics in original). Thus, for Erikson, one's ethnic and cultural background is clearly important to identity formation.

However, a careful reading of Erikson's writings on racial and national identity (Erikson, 1963a, 1963b, 1964, 1968, 1970, 1974, 1975; Erikson & Newton, 1973) reveals his strong sense of the negative potential of group identity and his awareness of the danger to the individual and the species of "pseudo-speciation."

> The term "pseudo-species"... denotes the fact that while man is obviously one species, he appears and continues on earth split into groups (from tribes to nations, from castes to classes, from religions to ideologies) which provide their members with a firm sense of God-given identity ... as well as legends, myths, and rituals that bind [the] group together and give to its existence a super-individual significance. This, to be sure, can inspire loyalty, heroism -- and poetry. What renders this process a potential ailment of the species as a whole, however, is the fact that in times of danger and upheaval such imagined precedence by providence is reinforced by a mortal fear and hate of other pseudo-species. (Erikson, 1975, pp. 176-177)

This quote is typical of Erikson's acknowledgment of the potential power and importance of ethnic identity along with his distrust and concern for the destructive capacity of pseudo-speciation. Erikson seems to see need for ethnic identity as the unfortunate outcome of the human tendency to form groups. His concerns are central to the differing views on the role of ethnicity in development (Ramirez, 1977) and education (Bullivant, 1981). Should one's ethnic heritage and distinctive ethnic characteristics be emphasized or deemphasized? Should multicultural education stress the differences among people of different backgrounds or their similarities?

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[1] This paper was presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Baltimore, April, 1987.

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One way of addressing these questions empirically is to determine the relationship of ethnic identity to attitudes towards one's own and other groups and to self-esteem. One goal of the present study was to examine this relationship.

However, before doing that, we wished to establish ethnicity as one of the domains central to identity development within an Eriksonian framework. Perhaps because of Erikson's distrust of ethnic identity, subsequent researchers have dealt very little with it. The early empirical work based on Erikson's theory was carried out by Marcia (1966), who, following Erikson's lead, examined the domains of occupation and ideology (religious and political) as the basis of identity. Most of the early work was done with White males, and Erikson's paradigm was upheld with those samples. Marcia (1980) in fact states that "Erikson's theory is one that accounts largely for identity development in males" (p. 178). However, for females, the paradigm did not hold up without modification. Subsequent work has recognized the need to add additional identity areas in studying women, and recent studies have added the interpersonal domains of sex roles, friendship, and dating as important components of identity (Grotevant, Thorbecke & Meyer, 1982; Archer, 1982; Craig-Bray & Adams, 1985).

Although there has been increasing research using female subjects, there has been relatively little identity research using non-White subjects. Only one of the 128 references in Marcia's (1980) review mentions non-White American subjects. In a few cases, different ethnic groups have been studied to compare their identity statuses (e.g., Abraham, 1984), but no research has looked at the issue of ethnicity directly as a dimension of identity alongside the occupational, ideological, and interpersonal domains. We suggest that just as new domains were necessary to understand identity development in women, so ethnicity should be added in order to understand identity development in minority subjects.

The psychological research that has been carried out on the topic of ethnic identity has derived from several diverse traditions: studies of self-identification or labelling in young children (Brand, Ruiz, & Padilla, 1974; Aboud, 1987) or in adults (Giles, Taylor, & Bourhis, 1977; Giles, Taylor, Lambert, & Albert, 1976); studies of ethnic behavior patterns as an aspect of identity (Rotheram & Phinney, 1987); and studies by minority researchers of the process of ethnic identity formation in specific minority group groups, including Blacks (Cross, 1978) and Asian-Americans (Kim, 1981). Only the work by Kim and Cross conceptualizes ethnic identity in terms similar to those of Erikson, viewing it as a developmental process involving exploration and commitment, leading to an achieved identity.

Cross's (1978) model of Black identity development describes the "Negro-to-Black conversion experience" typical of Black American college students during and after the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s. These movements increased ethnic awareness and pride among Blacks, as well as other minorities (Kim, 1981). On the basis of studies with college students, Cross presents a process model of ethnic identity development in five stages. The first stage, pre-encounter, is characterized by an unquestioning self-view that has been presented by parents and society. The next stage, encounter, is precipitated by a "shocking personal or social event that temporarily dislodges a person from his old world view, making the person receptive (vulnerable) to a new interpretation of his identity and his condition" (Cross, 1978, p. 17).

This stage might be compared to the "crisis" stage in Erikson's model. The third stage, immersion-emersion, involves turning to the Black culture and community and away from the White. It is characterized by rage against racism and anger at the White majority culture and at individuals. In the internalization stage, the Black person becomes clear about the value of his culture, his community, his identity as a Black. He experiences a confidence which allows him once again to look at all people and cultures and see their value. Finally, the last stage, internalization-commitment, solidifies the identity and leads to a commitment to help others deal with the disabling facts of White racism on minority individuals and their cultures.

In a study of the process of ethnic self-awareness and identity among Asian-American women, Kim (1981) describes a process similar to that of Cross, with differences which she attributes to the unique histories of the two groups. From in-depth interviews with a small sample of college-age and adult Asian-American women, she identifies an early stage of White identification, which involves an acceptance of White standards of attractiveness, followed by an awakening to social political consciousness, comparable to Cross's encounter stage, and in many cases triggered by the Civil Rights Movement. The next stage is a redirection toward Asian-American issues, resulting in an immersion in their own cultural background accompanied by anger toward White society. The final stage of incorporation results in the ability to relate to various groups without losing one's own identity. Confidence in oneself as Asian-American allows for a clear appraisal of one's own and other groups. A comparable model of minority identity development, based on clincal rather than empirical evidence, has been suggested by Atkinson, Morten, & Sue (1983). All of these models, like Erikson's, suggest that identity is achieved through a process of crisis (encounter, awakening) or exploration (immersion) followed by a commitment (internalization, incorporation) that results in a confident sense of self.

Both Cross and Kim cite evidence that achieving an ethnic identity is important to minority individuals' identity. There is ample additional anecdotal and clinical material attesting to the importance of ethnicity in the identity development of immigrants and racial or cultural minorities (e.g., Gay, 1985; Maldonado, 1975; Rodriguez, 1982; Sommers, 1964). While the importance of ethnicity is thus documented for minority groups, there is virtually no research in this area on White subjects, and no research that uses similar measures and makes comparisons across both minority and majority group subjects. We therefore wished to study both White subjects and minority group subjects, to determine whether the processes of identity search and commitment can be documented in the domain of ethnic identity, comparable to these processes in other more widely studied identity areas, and to examine the perceived importance of ethnicity.

In order to study ethnic identity search and commitment, a measure was needed to assess these processes. Measures of identity following Marcia's (1966) interview studies have used both interviews (Archer, 1982; Grotevant & Cooper, 1981) and questionnaires (Adams, Shea, & Fitch, 1979; Grotevant & Adams, 1984). The goal in most identity research derived from Marcia's (1966) seminal study has been to assign subjects to one of the four identity statuses, based on evidence of identity search and commitment. An achieved identity results from the experience of both search and commitment; identity diffusion is the status of someone who has experienced

neither. A foreclosed identity means commitment without search, whereas moratorium means an on-going search without a commitment. Although these statuses have been validated in identity research in adolescence using the identity domains of occupation and ideology, there is no empirical basis for assuming that these statuses apply to ethnic identity. Thus in this initial study, we decided not to attempt to assign individuals to ethnic identity statuses.

On the other hand, the studies of ethnic identity development discussed above (Cross, 1978; Kim, 1981) give clear evidence of the search and commitment processes. Furthermore, continuous search and commitment scores allow for more precise statistical analyses than categorical data, as in assigning subjects to identity statuses. In an interview study of identity development in Danish 17 and 18 year-olds, Matteson (1977) used both identity statuses (or categories) and scales of exploration and commitment, and examined their relationship to a number of dependent variables. He found that the scales of exploration and commitment were more sensitive than statuses for examining relationships among the variables. Similarly, Craig-Bray and Adams (1985) suggest that continuous scores for exploration and commitment may be more valuable than identity status for examining relationships among variables. It was therefore decided in this study to focus on the two processes of exploration and commitment, which can be measured directly, in contrast to the statuses which involve various combinations of these processes. Nevertheless, continuous search and commitment scores do allow us to derive an achieved identity score and make inferences about identity status; thus, achieved identity is discussed and used in some of the analyses.

In summary, the goals of this study were several. Our purposes were to document ethnic identity as an identity domain comparable to other more widely studied identity areas, to determine its perceived importance relative to other domains, and to examine the relationship of an achieved ethnic identity to self-esteem and ethnic attitudes. For each of these issues, we wished to identify similarities and differences across four ethnic groups, particularly differences between minority groups and the White majority. We hypothesized that there would be greater ethnic search among the minority groups than in the White sample, and that ethnicity would be perceived as an identity domain as important as, or more important than, other studied domains, especially among minority group subjects.

METHOD

Subjects

The subjects were drawn from an ethnically diverse urban state university in southern California, with an undergraduate ethnic make-up of about one quarter each Asian, Hispanic, and White, about one eighth Black, and the remainder from other groups. The subjects were 196 undergraduates whose questionnaires were selected from a larger sample of questionnaires on the basis of the following criteria: they were American-born, age 17 to 23, and identified themselves and both parents as members of one of four ethnic groups: Asian-American (N = 41), Black (N = 31), Mexican-American (N = 78), or White (N = 46). There were 64 males and 132 females (reflecting the over-all preponderance of females on the campus). The mean age was 19.7. Socioeconomic indicators differed among the four ethnic groups; for example the proportion of fathers whose jobs were professional or

managerial was: Mexican-Americans, 14.3%; Asian-Americans, 48.8%; Blacks, 50.0%; and Whites, 67.4%.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was developed to assess search and commitment in the area of ethnic identity and in two other identity areas, the importance of five identity areas, past experience related to ethnicity, ethnic attitudes, self-esteem, and demographic information. Ethnicity was defined on the questionnaire as follows: "Ethnic groups can be based on many things such as country of origin (Mexico, Japan), race (Black, White), culture (such as holidays, life style), language spoken (Spanish), or religion (Jewish)." Initial items asked subjects to report their own ethnic group and that of their parents by checking from a list of choices or filling in a blank, "Other." The subsequent items were either developed by the researchers or adapted from existing ego identity measures (e.g., Bennion & Adams, 1986). The format used throughout (with a few exceptions noted below) was a Likert type scale in which subjects rated their difference from or similarity to people with certain experiences, feelings or characteristics, on a four-point scale from 1 (very different) to 4 (very similar); a high score thus indicates presence of the variable. The initial questionnaire was pilot tested and revised on the basis of pilot test results. Additional modifications were made based on input from researchers representing the ethnic groups involved. The final version assessed the following variables:

1. EthnID-Search (Ethnic identity search). Subjects were asked to rate themselves on a four-point scale as similar to or different from people who have experienced ethnic identity search (e.g., "People who have gone through a period of serious questioning about ethnicity"). To counteract response bias, half the items were worded negatively ("People who have not...").

2. EthnID-Commit (Ethnic identity commitment). Subjects rated themselves relative to people who have made an ethnic identity decision or commitment (e.g., "People who are very clear about their own ethnicity and what it means to them"). Half of the items were worded negatively.

3. EthnID-Ach (Achieved ethnic identity). Since a combination of search and commitment is indicative of achieved identity status, an achieved ethnic identity score was derived by combining the ethnic search and commitment scores. A high score, indicating both search and commitment, suggests an achieved identity status.

4. Occupation ID-Ach and Sex role ID-Ach (Achieved occupational and achieved sex role identity). Items similar to the ethnicity items were included for occupational and sex role identity search and commitment. Identity achievement scores in these areas were derived by combining the search and commitment scores in each area, as was done for ethnic identity.

5. Past contacts with other groups. Subjects rated the degree to which their early neighborhood, elementary school, junior high, and senior high school were mostly own group, a mixture of groups, or mostly other group(s).

6. Importance of identity domains. Subjects rated five identity domains (occupation, politics, religion, sex role, and ethnicity) on a 4-point scale from not at all important to very important.

7. Self-esteem. Measured by the Rosenberg (1979) Self-Esteem

Inventory, adapted to the format of the questionnaire.

8. Demographics. Age, sex, level in college, birthplace, own and parents' ethnic group, mother's and father's birthplace, education, and occupation.

In addition, a number of items were included to assess specific experiences and attitudes related to ethnicity, such as having received parental teaching about ethnicity, having experienced prejudice, and holding positive and negative feelings about one's own and others' ethnicity.

Procedure

Questionnaires were administered by one of the two authors in 17 General Education courses from the natural sciences, behavioral sciences, and humanities. General Education courses are taken by students from all majors, generally during their freshman or sophomore year, but occasionally as juniors or seniors. All questionnaires which met the criteria described above for subjects were used, except for 10 questionnaires which were discarded as being incomplete or randomly completed. The four ethnic groups were proportionately represented in the discarded questionnaires.

RESULTS

Ethnic identity search and commitment

The main dependent variables used in the analysis of ethnic identity are separate scores for ethnic identity search (EthnID-Search) and ethnic identity commitment (EthnID-Commit), calculated as the mean of all items assessing that variable. Individual mean scores for EthnID-Search ranged from 1.0 to 3.8, with an over-all mean of 2.3; individual mean scores for EthnID-Commit ranged from 1.0 to 4.0, with an over-all mean of 2.9. The derived score for achieved ethnic identity (EthnID-Ach) was obtained by combining the EthnID-Search and EthnID-Commit scores and dividing by two; individual scores ranged from 1.3 to 3.8, with an over-all mean of 2.6.

The construct validity of ethnic identity as measured by the questionnaire can be examined in terms of convergence with other identity areas (Bennion & Adams, 1986). Pearson product-moment correlations of achieved ethnic identity with achieved occupational and sex role identity were calculated (see Table 1). Correlations of EthnID-Ach with achieved occupational identity are significant over-all and for all groups separately except Mexican-Americans. Correlations with sex role identity status are significant over-all and for two of the four groups (Blacks and Mexican-Americans) separately.

Analysis of variance was used to examine differences in ethnic identity search and commitment based on ethnic group membership, as well as on socioeconomic status, sex, and interactions among these variables. (As indicated above in the description of subjects, subjects differed on socioeconomic status (SES) indicators. For the present analysis, father's occupation was used as an SES index.) For EthnID-Search, there were significant differences based on ethnic group, but no differences for SES (as measured by father's occupation) or sex, and no interactions (see Table 2). For EthnID-Commit there were no main effects for ethnic group, SES, or sex, and no interactions.

We hypothesized that ethnic identity search would be higher among minority than majority group subjects. The results support the hypothesis.

Blacks scored the highest in EthnID-Search (2.67), followed by Mexican-Americans (2.46), Asian-Americans (2.2), and Whites (1.98). In contrast, the EthnID-Commit scores did not vary significantly by ethnic group; scores were as follows: Asian-American, 2.86; Black, 2.94; Mexican-American, 2.67; White, 2.85.

Importance of ethnic identity relative to other identity areas

Subjects gave absolute ratings to the importance of five identity areas on a 4 point scale. These data allow for examination of the individual importance of each area and for comparison of relative importance by areas and ethnic groups. Among the five identity areas rated by subjects, ethnic identity rated fourth in importance over-all, just slightly below religious identity, but well above political identity. However, relative importance of each area varied significantly among the four ethnic groups. Separate 4 x 4 (ethnic group by importance rating) chi-square analyses of each identity area showed that the four ethnic groups differed significantly in the importance attributed to each area. Results were as follows: occupational identity: $\chi^2(9, N=196) = 20.2$, $p<.05$); sex role identity: $\chi^2(9, N=196) = 30.6$, $p<.001$; religious identity: $\chi^2(9, N=195) = 37.9$, $p<.001$; ethnic identity: $\chi^2(9, N=196) = 47.7$, $p<.001$; and political identity: $\chi^2(9, N=196) = 23.2$, $p<.01$.

We hypothesized that ethnicity would have greater importance as an identity area for minority than for majority group members. The results support this hypothesis. In order to illustrate and display these differences, the two highest ratings of each area ("very important" and "quite important") were lumped together; the percentage of each ethnic group rating an identity area very or quite important are shown in Table 3. It can be seen that all groups rated occupational identity most important, but other areas showed wide variation. Over two-thirds of each of the three minority groups rated ethnic identity as quite or very important, in contrast to less than a quarter of the White subjects; and all minority groups rated ethnic identity more important than political identity. For Asian-Americans, ethnic identity was rated equal in importance to sex role identity as the second most important area, ahead of religious and political identity. For Blacks, ethnic identity was equal to sex role identity as the third most important area, after occupation and religion. For Mexican-Americans, ethnic identity was rated fourth in importance. Only for Whites was ethnic identity rated of least importance.

Correlates and antecedents of ethnic identity variables

The relationship of self-esteem to ethnic identity search and commitment and ethnic attitudes was assessed by means of Pearson product moment correlations (see Table 4). EthnID-Search was significantly related to self-esteem for Black and Mexican-American subjects. EthnID-Commit was significantly related to self-esteem for the three minority groups but not for White subjects. For White subjects, self-esteem was not related to attitudes towards own or other groups; for the three minority groups, self-esteem was significantly related to ethnic attitudes toward both own and other groups, with the one exception of Mexican-American own group attitudes.

Specific items dealing with past experiences and current attitudes related to ethnicity were analyzed separately. For each item, subjects were

dichotomized into those who rated themselves very or somewhat similar to, and those who rated themselves very or somewhat different from, people who had the described experience, and one way analysis of variance was used to compare ethnic identity search and commitment scores of the two groups. Subjects who rated themselves similar in Item #32 ("People whose parents or other adults taught them about their own ethnic heritage") had significantly higher EthnID-Search ($F [1, 195] = 25.2$, $p<.001$) and EthnID-Commit ($F [1,195] = 23.4$, $p<.001$) scores than those who rated themselves different. This relationship between ethnic search and commitment and being taught about one's heritage was not significant for Whites, but was significant for the three minority groups: Asian-Americans (EthnID-Search: $F [1, 40] = 7.7$, $p<01$; EthnID-Commit: $F [1,49] = 4.4$, $p<.05$), Blacks (EthnID-Search: $F [1,30] = 22.0$, $p<.001$; EthnID-Commit: $F [1, 30] = 10.3$, $p<.01$), and Mexican-Americans (EthnID-Search: $F [1,77] = 5.9$, $p<05$; EthnID-Commit: $F [1,77] = 18.9$, $p<.001$). Conversely, similarity to Item #67 ("People who have experienced prejudice from members of other ethnic groups") was positively related to EthnID-Search for Whites: $F (1, 46) = 6.9$, $p<.05$, and for the entire sample: $F (1,195) = 16.7$, $p<.001$, but not for the three minority groups individually.

DISCUSSION

The results of the present study document the process of ethnic identity development as being an important aspect of identity development that is related to other identity domains across four ethnic groups. For each ethnic group, ethnic identity scores are significantly correlated with scores for either occupational or sex role identity, or both, suggesting a similar developmental course for the different identity domains. In addition, ethnicity is rated as an important aspect of identity by well over half the sample. It is consistently rated by minorities as more important than the political domain, which has traditionally been one of the main areas assessed in identity research (e.g., Marcia, 1980; Bennion & Adams, 1986); it is rated equal in importance to the sex role domain by two minority groups, and ahead of religion for one. For these minority subjects, all American-born, their ethnic identity is clearly important.

It is perhaps not surprising that ethnicity has not been examined as a component of the identity process, considering that virtually all the studies of identity development that have followed Marcia's (1966) seminal article on identity status have been carried out by White researchers with White populations. However, it seems appropriate now to recognize and rectify this omission by including ethnicity as an identity domain in future studies of identity development in adolescence.

In the present study, self-esteem was related both to the ethnic identity processes of search and commitment and to positive ethnic attitudes. The role of self-esteem in ethnic identity has been a controversial topic since the early doll studies of Clark and Clark (1947) suggested that Black children had low self-esteem since they showed a preference for White dolls. Subsequent research separating self-esteem from reference group orientation (Cross, 1987) has generally shown that minority group adolescents do not have lower self-esteem than White adolescents (see also Rosenberg, 1979). The present research suggests that ethnicity per se is not related to self-esteem; rather, one's search and/or commitment to an ethnic identity is an important factor in self-esteem, at least for

minority group members. Other research supports this finding. A dissertation which examined identity achievement in a sample of Black college students (Winbush, 1978) reported a correlation between self-esteem and identity achievement. In a study of eighth-grade Black boys and girls (Paul & Fisher, 1980), students with a high self-concept scored higher than a low self-concept group on a measure of acceptance of Black identity.

These results are also congruent with research on self-esteem and identity development generally. Marcia (1966) found the self-esteem of identity achieved subjects less vulnerable to negative information than that of subjects with a diffuse identity. In a recent study with college students, Bennion and Adams (1986) found that identity achievement scores were positively correlated with a measure of self-acceptance. Thus a relationship between identity achievement and self-esteem in the area of ethnicity could be expected.

Although this was not a developmental study, the results provide some suggestions about process of ethnic identity development. All four ethnic groups show high ethnic identity commitment scores, suggesting that most of these college students are clear about the meaning of ethnicity for them. However, this does not imply an achieved ethnic identity, which requires evidence of exploration of options. Evidence of ethnic identity search was stronger in the minority than in the White subjects; it was especially strong in Blacks and Mexican-Americans and somewhat less in Asian-Americans. Since this study was aimed at understanding the processes of ethnic search and commitment, no attempt was made to apply the four identity status designations of Marcia (1980) to ethnic identity. However, the results indicate that minority subjects are more likely than Whites to have an achieved ethnic identity (high scores in both commitment and search), while Whites are more likely to have a foreclosed ethnic identity (high commitment, low search). This suggests that more minority students have arrived at their commitment to their group through a process of exploration, while many Whites appear to take their commitment for granted.

Clearly, past experiences play an important role in the process of ethnic identity development. However, the presence or absence of contact with other groups (in integrated vs. segregated neighborhoods or schools) does not appear as a factor. Rather, specific individual experiences are important. For minority group members, being taught about their heritage has a strong impact; for Whites in particular, the experience of prejudice encourages the exploration process.

Ethnic identity clearly has a different role in the development of minority adolescents than it does for majority group adolescents. A number of differences in identity development between majority and minority subjects have been mentioned: for Asian-Americans, Blacks, and Mexican-Americans, there is more importance given to ethnicity and more evidence of search. The fact that differences in ethnic identity search were found by ethnic group but not by sex or socioeconomic status reinforces this latter finding. In addition, self-esteem is more of a factor in ethnic identity and attitudes for minorities than for Whites. Differences in identity development between majority and minority group members can be understood in terms of the different experiences of the two groups. The American culture is overwhelmingly a reflection of the White community's values, authority, and standards. White adolescents do not face a need to question their values in terms of ethnicity, because the culture reflects their

values. Minority group adolescents have a more complex communal culture to which to respond. Although their family provides from birth the experience of one culture, they are also exposed to the majority White culture, through the media, school, and trips outside their community. In addition, they become aware of the response of the majority culture to them on the basis of their appearance or other cultural characteristics.

The resulting differences in identity development have been suggested in previous writings, although there has been little empirical evidence of this. Gurin and Epps (1975), for example, state that "The fact of minority status sharpens the universal necessity of group belonging for the development of a sense of identity" (p. 4). Anecdotal descriptions by minority writers emphasize, further, that the process of identity development for minorities is typically a highly emotional experience. Cross (1978) refers to the "euphoria, rage,... perturbation, effrontery, high risk taking..." that characterize immersion (exploration) in Black identity development. Kim (1980) also cites experiences of confusion, alienation, and stress in the process of developing one's own ethnic identity. It may be that the emotional content of ethnic identity has made it difficult to study, particularly with objective measures, and particularly for White researchers.

While clear differences between the minority and majority group subjects have been demonstrated, it is important to point out that there were differences as well among the three ethnic minority group studied. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the meanings of these differences, but they point to the unique histories, American contexts, and values of the three minority groups. In reference to these differences, Erikson (1975) mentions several explanatory factors: "the personal coherence of the individual and the role integration in his group,... his guiding images and the ideologies of his time,... his life history and the historical moment" (p. 20). These variations and the way they affect identity need to be examined in future research.

Not studied directly but also important in studying ethnic identity are the changes over time, suggested in the above reference to the historical moment. As society changes, "identity problems and even the symptoms of identity confusion have changed accordingly" (Erikson, 1975, p. 32). The results of this study suggest that, at least with the current increasing acceptance of multiculturalism in America, ethnic identity need not lead to the conflict and divisiveness characteristic of pseudo-speciation; rather it can be seen as a positive factor in development, contributing to self-esteem and positive ethnic attitudes.

The present study is just a beginning to the study of ethnic identity within Erikson's theoretical framework. Measures of ethnic identity search and commitment need to be validated with samples of different ages and different ethnicity, including immigrants. However, this study makes clear the importance of extending the study of identity to samples from diverse ethnic groups and including ethnicity as a component in the process.

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Table 1

CORRELATIONS OF ACHIEVED ETHNIC IDENTITY

WITH ACHIEVED OCCUPATIONAL AND SEX ROLE IDENTITY

Correlation of EthnID-Ach with:	Asian	Black	Mex-Am	White	Total
Occupation ID-Ach	.67***	.43**	.15	.34**	.31***
Sex role ID-Ach	.16	.49**	.28**	.04	.25***

** p<.01 *** p<.001

Table 2

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: ETHNID-SEARCH BY ETHNIC GROUP, SEX AND SES

Source of variation	sum of squares	df	mean square	F	p
Main effects					
Ethnic group	9.841	3	3.280	10.062	.001
Sex	.183	1	.183	.561	.455
SES	.270	2	.135	.414	.662
2-way interactions					
Ethnic gr x Sex	.219	3	.073	.224	.880
Ethnic gr x SES	2.149	5	.430	1.318	.258
Sex x SES	.807	2	.404	1.238	.293
3-way interactions					
Ethnic gr x sex s SES	.367	4	.092	.282	.890

Table 3

IMPORTANCE OF ETHNIC IDENTITY RELATIVE TO OTHER IDENTITY AREAS:

Percentage of each group rating the issue quite or very important

	Asian	Black	Mex-Amer	White	Mean
Occupational identity	100.0%	93.5%	98.7%	97.8%	97.5%
Sex role identity	65.9	77.4	92.3	63.1	74.7
Religious identity	31.7	80.0	74.4	54.3	60.1
Ethnic identity	65.9	77.4	69.2	23.9	59.1
Political orientation	19.5	61.3	55.2	45.6	45.4

Table 4

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN SELF-ESTEEM AND ETHNIC IDENTITY VARIABLES

	Asian	Black	Mex-Amer	White	Mean
Self-esteem with:					
EthnID-Search	-.05	.49**	.24*	.12	.16*
EthnID-Commit	.31*	.51**	.35**	.07	.27***
Attitudes toward own group	28*	.46**	.09	.19	.20**
Attitudes toward other groups	.38*	.41**	.43***	.09	.32***

* p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001